

11. The aristocratic party had already recognized for some time that Pericles was now the most important man in Athens and that he wielded far more power than any other citizen. But they were anxious that there should be someone in the city capable of standing up to him so as to blunt the edge of his authority and prevent it from becoming an outright monarchy. They therefore put forward Thucydides, of Alopecce, a man of good sense and a relative of Cimon, to lead the opposition. He was less of a soldier than Cimon, but better versed in forensic business and an abler politician, and by watching his opportunities at home and engaging Pericles in debate, he soon succeeded in creating a balance of power in Athenian affairs. He did not allow the aristocrats, the so-called party of the good and true, to become dispersed among the mass of the people in the Assembly, as they had done in the past, with the result that their influence had been swamped by sheer numbers. Instead, by separating and grouping them in a single body, he was able to concentrate their strength and make it an effective counterweight in the scale. Below the surface of affairs in Athens, there had existed from the very beginning a kind of flaw or seam, such as one finds in a piece of iron, which gave a hint of the rift that divided the aims of the popular and the aristocratic parties: but now these two men's rival ambitions and their struggle for power sharply widened this cleavage and caused the one side to be named the party of the many and the other of the few. Pericles therefore chose

1. *Constitution of Athens*, xxv, 4.

2. 449 B.C.

this moment to hand over the reins of power to the people to a greater extent than ever before and deliberately shaped his policy to please them. He constantly provided public pageants, banquets, and processions in the city, entertaining the people like children with elegant pleasures; and he sent out sixty triremes to cruise every year, in which many of the citizens served with pay for eight months and learned and practised seamanship at the same time. Besides this, he dispatched 1,000 settlers to the Chersonese,¹ 500 to Naxos, 250 to Andros, 1,000 to Thrace to make their homes with the Bisaltae, and others to the new colony named Thurii, which was founded in Italy near the site of Sybaris. In this way he relieved the city of a large number of idlers and agitators, raised the standards of the poorest classes, and, by installing garrisons among the allies, implanted at the same time a healthy fear of rebellion.

12. But there was one measure above all which at once gave the greatest pleasure to the Athenians, adorned their city and created amazement among the rest of mankind, and which is today the sole testimony that the tales of the ancient power and glory of Greece are no mere fables. By this I mean his construction of temples and public buildings; and yet it was this, more than any other action of his, which his enemies slandered and misrepresented. They cried out in the Assembly that Athens had lost her good name and disgraced herself by transferring from Delos into her own keeping the funds that had been contributed by the rest of Greece, and that now the most plausible excuse for this action, namely, that the money had been removed for fear of the barbarians and was being guarded in a safe place, had been demolished by Pericles himself. 'The Greeks must be outraged,' they cried. 'They must consider this an act of bare-faced tyranny, when they see that with their own contributions, extorted from them by force for the war against the Persians, we are gilding and beautifying our city, as if it were some vain woman decking her-

1. The peninsula, which was made familiar to our century by the Gallipoli campaign, was captured by Cimon in 475 and colonized in 448-447 B.C. Naxos revolted from Athens and lost its independence in 467; it was occupied by Athenian settlers in 448. Andros was probably settled by the Athenians a few years earlier. Thurii was founded in 443 B.C. on the territory of Sybaris: this city had been defeated by Croton in 510 B.C. and the site completely razed. The new colony was built by emigrants from many Greek cities and the Athenians did not attempt to dominate it.

self out with costly stones and statues and temples worth millions of money.'

Pericles' answer¹ to the people was that the Athenians were not obliged to give the allies any account of how their money was spent, provided that they carried on the war for them and kept the Persians away. 'They do not give us a single horse, nor a soldier, nor a ship. All they supply is money,' he told the Athenians, 'and this belongs not to the people who give it, but to those who receive it, so long as they provide the services they are paid for. It is no more than fair that after Athens has been equipped with all she needs to carry on the war, she should apply the surplus to public works, which, once completed, will bring her glory for all time, and while they are being built will convert that surplus to immediate use. In this way all kinds of enterprises and demands will be created which will provide inspiration for every art, find employment for every hand, and transform the whole people into wage-earners, so that the city will decorate and maintain herself at the same time from her own resources.'

Certainly it was true that those who were of military age and physically in their prime could always earn their pay from the public funds by serving on Pericles' various campaigns. But he was also anxious that the unskilled masses, who had no military training, should not be debarred from benefiting from the national income, and yet should not be paid for sitting about and doing nothing. So he boldly laid before the people proposals for immense public works and plans for buildings, which would involve many different arts and industries and require long periods to complete, his object being that those who stayed at home, no less than those serving in the fleet or the army or on garrison duty, should be enabled to enjoy a share of the national wealth. The materials to be used were stone, bronze, ivory, gold, ebony, and cypress-wood, while the arts or trades which wrought or fashioned them were those of carpenter, modeller, copper-smith, stone-mason, dyer, worker in gold and ivory, painter, embroiderer, and engraver, and besides these the carriers and suppliers of the materials, such as merchants, sailors, and pilots for the sea-borne

1. The Athenian case was that their protection kept off the Persians and kept down the pirates. What the allies resented was not only the high cost of these services in tribute, but also the political control exercised from Athens. It was only the larger islands, Chios, Mitylene, and Samos, which possessed their own oligarchies. The allies were also subject to Athenian courts.

traffic, and waggon-makers, trainers of draught animals, and drivers for everything that came by land. There were also rope-makers, weavers, leatherworkers, roadbuilders and miners. Each individual craft, like a general with an army under his separate command, had its own corps of unskilled labourers at its disposal, and these worked in a subordinate capacity, as an instrument obeys the hand, or the body the soul, and so through these various demands the city's prosperity was extended far and wide and shared among every age and condition in Athens.

13. So the buildings arose, as imposing in their sheer size as they were inimitable in the grace of their outlines, since the artists strove to excel themselves in the beauty of their workmanship. And yet the most wonderful thing about them was the speed with which they were completed. Each of them, men supposed, would take many generations to build, but in fact the entire project was carried through in the high summer of one man's administration. On the other hand we are told that when Zeuxis the painter once heard Agatharchus boasting about how swiftly and easily he painted his figures, his retort was, 'Mine take, and last, a long time.' Certainly mere dexterity and speed of execution seldom give a lasting value to a work of art or bestow a delicate beauty upon it. It is the time laid out in laborious creation which repays us later through the enduring strength it confers. It is this, above all, which makes Pericles' works an object of wonder to us - the fact that they were created in so short a span, and yet for all time. Each one possessed a beauty which seemed venerable the moment it was born, and at the same time a youthful vigour which makes them appear to this day as if they were newly built. A bloom of eternal freshness hovers over these works of his and preserves them from the touch of time, as if some unfading spirit of youth, some ageless vitality had been breathed into them.

The director and supervisor of the whole enterprise was Pheidias, although there were various great architects and artists employed on the individual buildings. For example, Callicrates and Ictinus were the architects of the Parthenon with its cella 100 feet long; it was Corobus who started to build the temple of initiation at Eleusis, but he only lived to see the columns erected on the lower story and the architraves placed on the capitals. After his death, Metagenes of Xypete added the frieze and the upper colonnade, and Xenocles of the

deme of Cholargus crowned it with the lantern over the shrine. Calliocrates was the contractor for the third Long Wall,¹ which ran between the original two, and for which Socrates says² that he himself heard Pericles propose the decree to the people. Cratinus makes fun of the slow progress of the work, saying

Pericles had built this wall long ago, if words could do it;
In fact, not one inch has been added to it.

The Odeon, with its interior arranged to accommodate many rows of seats and supporting columns, and its circular roof sloping down from its apex, was said to be an exact reproduction of the king of Persia's pavilion, and this was also built under Pericles' direction. For this reason Cratinus has another joke at his expense in *The Thracian Women*:

As Zeus an onion on his head he wears,
As Pericles a whole orchestra bears;
Afraid of broils and banishment no more,
He tunes the shell he trembled at before.

At the same time, still in pursuit of distinction, Pericles had a decree passed to establish a musical contest as part of the Panathenaic festival. He himself was elected one of the stewards and laid down rules as to how the competitors should sing or play the flute or the lyre. At that time and from thenceforward the audience came to the Odeon to hear these musical contests.

The Propylaea, or portals of the Acropolis, of which Mnesicles was the architect, were finished in the space of five years. While they were being built, a miraculous incident took place, which suggested that the goddess Athena herself, so far from standing aloof, was taking a hand and helping to complete the work. One of the workmen, the most active and energetic among them, slipped and fell from a great height. He lay for some time severely injured, and the doctors could hold out no hope that he would recover. Pericles was greatly distressed at this, but the goddess appeared to him in a dream and ordered a course of treatment, which he applied, with the result that the man was easily and quickly healed. It was to commemorate this that

1. The two original Long Walls had been built a considerable distance apart. If an enemy attack broke through either, communications with the Piraeus would have been interrupted, so Pericles built a third, which ran parallel to the western wall and some two hundred yards inside it.

2. Plato, *Gorgias*, 455c.

Pericles set up the bronze statue of Athena the Healer near the altar dedicated to that goddess, which they say was there before.

But it was Pheidias who directed the making of the great golden statue of Athena, and his name is duly inscribed upon the marble tablet on the Acropolis as its creator. Almost the whole enterprise was in his hands, and because of his friendship with Pericles all the artists and craftsmen, as I have said, came under his orders. The result was that he himself became the victim of envy and his patron of slander, for the rumour was put about that Pheidias arranged intrigues for Pericles with free-born Athenian women, when they came on the pretext of looking at the works of art. The comic poets took up this story and showered Pericles with all the innuendoes they could invent, coupling his name with the wife of Menippus, a man who was his friend and had served as his second in command in the army. Even Pylampus's fondness for keeping birds was dragged in, and because he was a friend of Pericles, he was accused of using his peacocks as presents for the women who granted Pericles their favours. The fact is that men who know nothing of decency in their own lives are only too ready to launch foul slanders against their betters and to offer them up as victims to the evil deity of popular envy. And, indeed, we can hardly be surprised at this, when we find that even Stesimbrotus of Thasos has dared to give currency to the shocking and completely unfounded charge that Pericles seduced his son's wife. This only goes to show how thickly the truth is hedged around with obstacles and how hard it is to track down by historical research. Writers who live after the events they describe find that their view of them is obscured by the lapse of time, while those who investigate the deeds and lives of their contemporaries are equally apt to corrupt and distort the truth, in some cases because of envy or private hatred, in others through the desire to flatter or show favour.

14. Thucydides and the other members of his party were constantly denouncing Pericles for squandering public money and letting the national revenue run to waste, and so Pericles appealed to the people in the Assembly to declare whether in their opinion he had spent too much. 'Far too much,' was their reply, whereupon Pericles retorted, 'Very well then, do not let it be charged to the public account but to my own, and I will dedicate all the public buildings in my name.' It may have been that the people admired such a gesture in the grand

manner, or else that they were just as ambitious as Pericles to have a share in the glory of his works. At any rate they raised an uproar and told him to draw freely on the public funds and spare no expense in his outlay. Finally, Pericles ventured to put matters to the test of an ostracism, and the result was that he secured his rival's banishment¹ and the dissolution of the party which had been organized against him.

15. From this point political opposition was at an end, the parties had merged themselves into one, and the city presented a single and unbroken front. Pericles now proceeded to bring under his own control not only home affairs, but all issues in which the authority of Athens was involved; these included matters of tribute, the army, the navy, the islands, maritime affairs, the great resources which Athens derived both from the Greek states and from the barbarians, and the leadership she exercised which was buttressed by subject states, friendships with kings and alliances with dynasties. But at the same time Pericles' own conduct took on quite a different character. He was no longer so docile towards the people, nor so ready to give way to their caprices, which were as shifting and changeable as the winds. He abandoned the somewhat nerveless and indulgent leadership he had shown on occasion, which might be compared to a soft and flowery melody, and struck instead the firm, high note of an aristocratic, even regal statesmanship. And since he used his authority honestly and unswervingly in the interests of the city, he was usually able to carry the people with him by rational argument and persuasion. Still there were times when they bitterly resented his policy, and then he tightened the reins and forced them to do what was to their advantage, much as a wise physician treats a prolonged and complicated disease, allowing the patient at some moments pleasures which can do him no harm, and at others giving him caustics and bitter drugs which cure him. There were, as might be expected, all kinds of disorders to be found among a mass of citizens who possessed an empire as great as that of Athens, and Pericles was the only man capable of keeping each of these under control. He achieved this most often by using the people's hopes and fears as if they were rudders, curbing them when they were arrogant and raising their hopes or comforting them when they were disheartened. In this way he proved that rhetoric, in Plato's phrase,² is

1. 444 B.C.

2. *Phaedrus*, 271c.

the art of working upon the souls of men by means of words, and that its chief business is the knowledge of men's characters and passions which are, so to speak, the strings and stops of the soul and require a most skilful and delicate touch. The secret of Pericles' power depended, so Thucydides tells us,¹ not merely upon his oratory, but upon the reputation which his whole course of life had earned him and upon the confidence he enjoyed as a man who had proved himself completely indifferent to bribes. Great as Athens had been when he became her leader, he made her the greatest and richest of all cities, and he came to hold more power in his hands than many a king and tyrant. And in the end he did not increase the fortune his father left him by so much as a single drachma from the public funds, a source of wealth which some men even managed to pass on to their children.

16. But despite his unselfishness, there can be no doubt as to his power, which Thucydides describes to us clearly, while even the comic poets testify to it unwittingly in some of their malicious jokes. For example, they nickname him and his associates 'the new Pisistratids', and call upon him to take the oath that he will never set himself up as tyrant, as if his supremacy were too oppressive and out of all proportion in a democracy. Telecleides says that the Athenians had handed over to him

The cities' tribute, even the cities themselves
To hold or to set free as he thinks fit,
And the cities' walls to build or to pull down,
Their treaties and their armies, their power, their peace,
Their wealth, and all the gifts good fortune brings.

And all this was by no means a sudden harvest, the climax of popularity of an administration which flourished only for a brief season. The fact is that for forty years Pericles held the first place among men such as Ephialtes,² Myronides, Cimon, Tolmides, and Thucydides, and after the fall of Thucydides and his ostracism, he exercised for no less than fifteen years a continuous, unbroken authority through his annual tenure of the office of general. During the whole of this period he proved himself completely incorruptible by bribery, although he was not altogether averse to making money. As for the wealth he had

1. ii, 65.

2. Plutarch is reckoning Pericles' career as having lasted from 469 to 429 B.C., but there is little doubt that Ephialtes was the leader of their party till his murder in 461 B.C.

legally inherited, he adopted what seemed to him the simplest and most exact method of dealing with it, to ensure that his fortune should not be dissipated by neglect nor yet cause him much trouble or loss of time when his mind was occupied with higher things. His practice was to dispose of each year's produce in a single sale, and then to buy in the market each item as it was needed for his daily life and his household. This arrangement did not endear Pericles to his sons when they grew up, nor did their wives find him at all a generous provider. They blamed his precise day-to-day regulation of expenses, since it allowed no margin for the superfluities which are usual in a great house in prosperous circumstances, but instead obliged his income and his purchases to balance one another exactly. He had one servant, Evangelus, who kept up all this meticulous accounting, and who was either exceptionally gifted by nature or else was trained by Pericles, so that he excelled everyone else in the science of domestic economy.

This course of conduct owed nothing to the wisdom of Anaxagoras, for the philosopher went so far as to abandon his house and let his land lie fallow and be grazed by sheep, while he pursued his lofty thoughts and his passion for speculation. However, the life of a contemplative philosopher is a very different thing, I take it, from the life of a statesman. The former brings his intellect to bear upon great and noble ends, but without the aid of instruments and independently of external factors; whereas the latter, in so far as he applies his gifts to the common needs of mankind, must sometimes regard wealth not merely as one of the necessities of life, but even as one of its nobler elements, as in fact was the case with Pericles, who gave help to many of the poorer citizens. It is said, too, that at a time when Pericles was absorbed in public affairs, Anaxagoras, who was by then an old man with no one to care for him, took to his bed and covered his face with his robe, determined to starve himself to death. When Pericles heard the news he was horrified, and at once ran to the poor man and begged him to live. He used every argument and entreaty and lamented not so much Anaxagoras's fate as his own, if he were now to lose such a trusted counsellor in matters of government. At this Anaxagoras, so the story goes, unmuffled his head and said, 'Pericles, even a lamp has oil put into it by those who need it.'

17. When the Spartans began to be vexed by the growing power of Athens, Pericles, by way of encouraging the people to cherish even

higher ambitions and making them believe themselves capable of great achievements, introduced a proposal that all Greeks, whether living in Europe or in Asia, in small or in large cities alike, should be invited to send delegates to a congress¹ at Athens. The subjects to be discussed were the Greek sanctuaries which had been burned down by the Persians; the sacrifices owed to the gods on behalf of Hellas to fulfil the vows made when they were fighting the Persians; and the security of the seas, so that all ships could sail them without fear and keep the peace. Twenty men were chosen from the citizens above fifty years of age to convey this invitation. Five of these invited the Ionian and Dorian Greeks in Asia and the islands, as far as Lesbos and Rhodes; five visited the regions on the Hellespont and those of Thrace as far as Byzantium; five others proceeded to Boeotia, Phocis, and the Peloponnese, passing from there by way of the Ozolian Locrians to the neighbouring mainland, as far as Acarnania and Ambracia, while the rest travelled through Euboea to the Oetaeans and the Maliac gulf, and to the Achaeans of Phthia and the Thessalians; urging them all to attend and join in the deliberations for the peace and well-being of Greece. However, nothing was achieved, and the delegates never assembled because of the covert opposition of the Spartans; at least this is the reason generally given, since the Athenian overtures were first rejected in the Peloponnese. I have mentioned this episode, however, as an illustration of Pericles' lofty spirit and of the grandeur of his conceptions.

18. In his military operations he was renowned above all for his wariness. He never willingly engaged in a battle which involved much danger or uncertainty, nor did he envy or follow the example of those commanders who have gained a reputation as great generals by running risks or trusting to exceptional luck; indeed, he often used to say to his fellow-citizens that, so far as it depended on him, they could count themselves immortals and go on living for ever. There was an occasion when Pericles found that Tolmides, a soldier who had previously enjoyed particularly good fortune and had had exceptional honours bestowed upon him for his campaigns, was preparing to

1. This may have been summoned in 448-447 B.C. just after Cimon's death. If so it was an ingenious diplomatic stroke in the 'cold war' of the period; for Sparta to have attended such a congress convoked by the Athenians at Athens would have amounted to a tacit acceptance of Athenian hegemony throughout Greece.

invade Boeotia. Tolmides had given no thought to the right moment for launching the attack, but he had persuaded 1,000 – without counting the rest of his force – of the bravest and most adventurous men of military age to volunteer. Pericles did his utmost in the Assembly to restrain Tolmides and dissuade him from going, and he remarked in a famous phrase that if he would not listen to Pericles, he would do well to be guided by Time, the most experienced counsellor of all. This saying did not bring him much credit at that moment. But a few days afterwards the news came that Tolmides had been defeated and killed in battle near Coronea¹ and that many of the bravest Athenians had fallen with him, and this greatly increased the admiration and good-will the people felt towards Pericles, since he now seemed to them a man of foresight as well as a patriot.

19. Of all his campaigns it was the expedition to the Chersonese² which was the most gratefully remembered, since it proved the salvation of the Greeks who lived there. Pericles not only brought with him a thousand Athenian colonists and so provided the cities there with fresh strength and vigour, but he also secured the neck of the isthmus with a fortified line stretching from sea to sea. By this means he barred the way to the Thracians, who had swarmed all over the Chersonese, and put an end to the constant and harassing border warfare to which the settlers had been exposed, since their territory marched with that of the neighbouring barbarian tribes and had been overrun by marauding bands, whose haunts were inside the frontier or close to it. But the venture which earned him most fame and admiration among foreigners was his voyage round the Peloponnese,³ when he put to sea from Pegae⁴ in the Megarid with a fleet of 100 triremes. He not only laid waste a long stretch of the coast as Tolmides had done before him, but he also led the heavy infantry from the ships, advanced far inland and inspired such fear in the enemy that they took refuge behind their walls at his approach. The only exceptions were the men of Sicyon, who made a stand against him in Nemea and engaged him in a pitched battle, but he routed them by main force and set up a trophy for his victory. After this he took on

1. 447 B.C.

2. 447 B.C.

3. 453 B.C.

4. A port on the Corinthian Gulf. The expedition was in fact confined to the northern Peloponnese and the gulf itself.

board troops from Achaëa, which was friendly to him, and moved on with the fleet to the northern shore of the Corinthian Gulf. There he sailed past the mouth of the Achelous, overran Acarnania, shut up the people of Oeniadae¹ behind their walls, and after devastating their territory returned home. Throughout this expedition he had proved himself a terror to the enemy, and at the same time a prudent yet vigorous leader of his fellow citizens, for nothing went wrong, even by accident, from beginning to end of the operations for the men who took part in them.

20. Pericles also sailed into the Black Sea² with a large and splendidly equipped fleet, and there he treated the Greek cities considerably and secured by negotiation the various local arrangements which they desired. At the same time he demonstrated to the neighbouring barbarian states and their kings and princes not only the strength of the Athenian forces, but also their confidence and their freedom to sail wherever they chose and to dominate these waters. He also left thirteen warships and a land force under the command of Lamachus with a group of exiles from Sinope to help them against Timesilaus. Later, when the tyrant and his supporters had been driven out of the city, Pericles had a decree passed that 600 Athenian volunteers should sail to Sinope and settle there with the inhabitants, dividing among themselves the houses and lands which had previously belonged to the tyrant and his followers.

But there were other instances when he would not give way to the Athenians' more reckless impulses. He refused to be swept along with them, when they became intoxicated with their power and good fortune, and talked of recovering Egypt and attacking the sea-board of the Persian Empire. Many people, too, even as early as this, were obsessed with that extravagant and ill-starred ambition to conquer Sicily, which was afterwards fanned into flame by Alcibiades and other orators. There were even some who dreamed of attacking Carthage and Etruria, and, indeed, their hopes were not altogether

1. An exceptionally well fortified town in Acarnania with pro-Spartan sympathies.

2. About 436 B.C. This was the first appearance of an Athenian general with a strong force beyond the Bosphorus. The control of the grain route along the Black Sea and the trading relations of Athens with this area were among her most vital interests, and a demonstration of strength here was a far-sighted diplomatic move.

ill-founded, when one thinks of the extent of the Athenian dominion at that time and the full tide of success which seemed to attend all their undertakings.

21. Pericles, however, constantly strove to curb this extravagant spirit of conquest, to restrain the desire to meddle with foreign states and to devote Athens' main strength to guarding and consolidating what she had already won. He considered that to hold the Spartans in check was one of the prime objectives of Athenian policy, and he set himself to oppose them in every way; he showed this in many of his decisions and particularly by the action which he took in the Sacred War.¹ The Spartans sent an expedition to Delphi and forced the Phocians, who were then in possession of the sanctuary, to give it up to the people of Delphi. But no sooner had the Spartans left than Pericles dispatched a counter-expedition and reinstated the Phocians. The Spartans had been given by the people of Delphi the right of precedence in consulting the oracle and had had the record of this carved on the forehead of the bronze wolf in the sanctuary. Now Pericles secured the same privilege for Athens and had it engraved along the right-hand side of the same wolf.

22. Events proved that Pericles was right in seeking to confine the power of Athens to Greece proper. First of all Euboea revolted² and he was obliged to lead an army against the island. Immediately afterwards the news arrived that Megara had gone over to the enemy and that an invading army under Pleistoanax, the Spartan king, was threatening the frontiers of Attica. Pericles now hurriedly brought back his army from Euboea³ for the war in Attica. He did not risk an engagement with a force of hoplites, who were at once so numerous, so brave, and so eager for battle. But he took note of the fact that Pleistoanax was a very young man and that among his advisers he relied mainly on Cleandridas, whom the ephors had sent out with him on account of the king's youth to act as his tutor and adviser. Pericles opened secret negotiations with Cleandridas and soon succeeded in corrupting him with bribes and prevailing on him to withdraw the Peloponnesian army from Attica.

1. About 448 B.C.

2. 446 B.C.

3. This uprising was concerted between the Euboeans and the Peloponnesian states, to coincide with the end of the five years' truce between Athens and Sparta in the summer of 446.

When the expedition returned and dispersed to its various cities, the Spartans were so angry that they inflicted a heavy fine on their king. Pleistoanax could not pay this in full and so left the country, while Cleandridas who had retired into voluntary exile was condemned to death. He was the father of that Gylippus who later brought about the destruction of the Athenian expedition to Sicily. Nature seems to have bred avarice in the son as if it were a congenital disease, for Gylippus himself, after his brilliant exploits, was also convicted of taking bribes and banished from Sparta in disgrace. This story, however, is more fully told in my *Life of Lysander*.¹

23. When Pericles made up his accounts for the campaign and included in them an item of ten talents for 'necessary expenses', the people gave their approval without asking inquisitive questions or probing the mystery further. Some writers, Theophrastus the philosopher among them, have asserted that every year on Pericles' initiative ten talents found their way to Sparta, and that with this money he conciliated all the leading men in office and so staved off a war; what Pericles was buying, however, they say, was not peace so much as time² in which to make preparations at his leisure and finally wage war all the more effectively. However this may be, he soon turned his attention back to the revolt in Euboea, crossed over with fifty warships and 5,000 hoplites and reduced the cities there to submission. He banished from the city of Chalcis the class known as knights, which consisted of the men of outstanding wealth and reputation, and he transported the whole population of Hestiaeae from their territory and replaced them with Athenian colonists. He made an example of this one people and punished them relentlessly because they had captured an Athenian ship and put the whole crew to death.

24. Some four years later, after the Athenians and the Spartans had concluded their thirty years' peace, Pericles had a decree passed to authorize his expedition to Samos,³ on the ground that the islanders

1. *Lysander*, Ch. 16.

2. By 435 B.C. the public works programme had been paid for and surpluses from the tribute began to accumulate; they had reached 6,000 talents when the Peloponnesian War broke out in 431. This money was 'paid back' to the various gods whose treasuries had financed the building programme, but could be drawn on by the state in case of extreme need.

3. 440 B.C.

had not obeyed the order given them by Athens to break off their war against Miletus.

Now it is commonly supposed that Pericles took these measures against Samos for the sake of Aspasia; so this is perhaps a suitable place to consider the extraordinary art or power this woman exercised, which enabled her to captivate the leading statesmen of the day and even provided the philosophers with a theme for prolonged and elevated discussions. It is generally agreed that she was Milesian by birth and that her father was Axiochus, and she is said to have set out to rival the career of Thargelia, an Ionian woman of earlier times, in marking down for her conquests only men of great power. Thargelia came to be a great beauty and possessed at the same time exceptional charm and intelligence. She had many lovers among the Greeks, all of whom she won over to the Persian interest, and in this way, since they were all men of high position and influence, the seeds of sympathy for the Persians were sown throughout the Greek cities. In the same fashion Pericles, too, according to some writers, was attracted to Aspasia mainly because of her rare political wisdom. Socrates visited her from time to time with his disciples and some of his close friends brought their wives to listen to her conversation, even though she carried on a trade that was anything but honourable or even respectable, since it consisted of keeping a house of young courtesans. Aeschines says that Lysicles¹ the sheep-dealer, a man of low birth and character, came to be the leading figure in Athens because of his marriage to Aspasia after Pericles' death. And in Plato's dialogue, the *Menexenus* – even though the first section is written partly as a parody of the rhetoricians – there is certainly this element of truth, namely, that the woman had the reputation of being associated with a whole succession of Athenians, who came to her to learn rhetoric. However, Pericles' attachment to Aspasia seems to have been a more passionate affair. His own wife was closely related to him: she had been married first of all to Hipponicus, to whom she bore Callias, who was nicknamed 'the rich', and her children by Pericles were Xanthippus and Paralus. Afterwards, when they found each other incompatible, Pericles legally handed her over to another man with her own consent and himself lived with Aspasia, whom he loved

1. He married Aspasia six months after Pericles' death. He was elected general with Nicias in 428, the first demagogue to attain this post, and was killed in Caria in the same year.

dearly. The story goes that every day, when he went out to the market-place and returned, he greeted her with a kiss.

Aspasia is referred to in the comedies of the time as the new Omphale, or Deianeira, or even Hera. Cratinus bluntly called her a prostitute in these lines:

To find our Zeus a Hera, the goddess of Vice
Produced that shameless bitch Aspasia.

Pericles is believed to have had an illegitimate son by her, who is mentioned by Eupolis in his play *The Demes*, where Pericles is introduced as asking

Is my son alive?

and Myronides answers

Yes, he would have been a citizen long before
But for the shame of his mother, who is a whore.

Aspasia, they say, became so celebrated, that even Cyrus, the prince who fought his brother, the king, for the sovereignty of the Persian Empire, gave the name of Aspasia to his favourite concubine, who had previously been called Milto. She was a Phocaean by birth, the daughter of a man named Hermotimus, and when Cyrus was killed in battle, she was captured and brought to the king¹ and later gained great influence with him at court. These details concerning Aspasia come into my mind as I write, and it would have been unnatural to omit them.

25. However, to return to the war with Samos. Pericles is accused of getting the decree against the islanders passed at Aspasia's request for the benefit of the Milesians. The two states were at war over the possession of Priene, and the Samians had gained the advantage when the Athenians ordered them to break off the fighting and submit their differences to arbitration at Athens. The Samians refused and Pericles then set sail, dissolved the oligarchical government there, took fifty of their leading men and the same number of children as hostages and sent them to Lemnos. It is said, indeed, that each of these hostages was ready to give Pericles a talent on his own account and that he was offered even more by those who wished to prevent a democracy from being established in the city. Besides all this, Pissuthnes, the Persian

1. See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, i, 10.

satrap, who was particularly well disposed to the Samians, sent Pericles 10,000 gold staters and made a special plea for the city. However, Pericles accepted none of these offers, but dealt with the Samians just as he had already decided to do, set up a democracy there and sailed back to Athens. Thereupon the Samians immediately revolted, after Pissuthnes had contrived to steal away their hostages from Lemnos and had provided them in other ways with the means to carry on the war, and so once again Pericles came out against them with the fleet. He found that they were by no means passive or dismayed at his arrival, but were defiantly resolved to fight the Athenians for the mastery of the seas. There was a fierce naval battle near an island called Tragia, in which Pericles won a decisive victory, and with forty-four of his ships defeated a fleet of seventy, twenty of which were infantry transports.

26. After his victory and the enemy's flight, he lost no time in capturing the harbour and he then laid siege to the city of Samos. The Samians, in spite of their defeat, still ventured in one way or another to sally out and fight under the city walls. But soon a second and larger fleet arrived from Athens and the islanders were then completely blockaded. At this point Pericles took sixty triremes and sailed out into the open sea: most authorities agree that his object was to intercept a fleet of Phoenician ships on their way to help the Samians, and to engage them as far away from the island as possible. According to Stesimbrotus, however, his intention was to attack Cyprus, but this seems extremely unlikely.

In any case, whichever his plan was, he seems to have blundered. As soon as he had sailed away, Melissus, the son of Ithagenes, a philosopher who was then in command of the Samian forces, concluded that there was nothing more to be feared from the Athenians, either because of the reduced size of the fleet which was left, or perhaps because of the inexperience of the Athenian commanders, and so he prevailed on his fellow-citizens to attack them. In the battle which followed, the Samians scored a victory, took a large number of Athenian prisoners and destroyed many of their ships, so that they now gained command of the sea and were enabled to lay in warlike supplies, which they did not possess before: indeed, Aristotle goes so far as to say that Pericles himself was defeated by Melissus in an earlier sea-battle.

The Samians, by way of retaliation, branded their Athenian prisoners on the forehead with an owl, as the Athenians had once branded them with a *samaena*. The *samaena* is a warship with a turned-up beak, like a boar's snout, but it is broader than a trireme and has a paunch-like hull, and this makes it a swift sailer which can also weather a high sea. It got its name because the first ship of this kind made its appearance at Samos, where it was built by the orders of Polycrates the tyrant. This episode of the branding is supposed to be hinted at in Aristophanes' verse when he says:

The Samians are a deeply lettered people.

27. However this may be, as soon as Pericles heard of the disaster which had overtaken his fleet, he hurried back to the rescue. He defeated Melissus, who came out to meet him, routed the enemy and at once built a wall around the city, for he preferred to get the upper hand and capture it at the expense of time and money rather than of the wounds and the lives of his fellow-citizens. But as time went on, the Athenians grew impatient at the delay and were more and more eager to fight and it became difficult to restrain their ardour. Pericles therefore split up his force into eight divisions and made them all draw lots. He allowed the division which drew the white bean to eat well and rest, while the others did the fighting. This is the reason, so the story goes, why people who have had a day of celebration call it a white day, from the white bean.

Ephorus tells us that Pericles also used various siege engines, as their novelty particularly appealed to him, and that Artemon the engineer was present at these operations. He was nicknamed Periphoretus because he was lame and had to be carried in a litter to any works that needed his immediate attention. Heracleides of Pontus, however, refutes this story on the evidence of Anacreon's poems, which refer to Artemon Periphoretus as living many generations before the Samian war and these events. He says that Artemon was a man of luxurious habits and a weak character, liable to panic, who spent most of his time sitting at home with two slaves holding a bronze shield over his head, for fear that something might fall on it. If ever he was obliged to go out, he had himself carried about in a little hammock, which was slung so low that it almost touched the ground and this was the reason for his nickname, Periphoretus.

28. In the ninth month of the siege the Samians surrendered. Pericles demolished their walls, confiscated their fleet, and imposed a heavy fine on them, part of which they paid at once and the rest they agreed to pay at fixed intervals, and they also gave hostages as security. Duris the Samian magnifies these events into a tragedy and accuses Pericles and the Athenians of great brutality, although there is no word of this in Thucydides, nor Ephorus, nor Aristotle. He certainly does not appear to be telling the truth when he says that Pericles had the Samian captains and marines from each ship brought into the marketplace in Miletus and crucified there, and that when they had already suffered this torture for ten days he gave orders for their heads to be beaten in with clubs and their bodies thrown on the ground unburied. In any case, Duris is apt to overstep the limits of the truth, even when there are no personal interests of his at stake, and so it seems all the more likely that in this instance he has drawn a horrifying picture of his country's sufferings simply to blacken the name of Athens.

When Pericles returned home after subduing Samos, he had funeral honours paid to all the Athenians who had lost their lives in the campaign, and he won especial admiration for the speech¹ he delivered over their tombs, according to the usual custom. As he stepped down from the rostrum, many of the women of Athens clasped his hand and crowned him with garlands and fillets like a victorious athlete. Elpinice, however, came up to him and said: 'This was a noble action, Pericles, and you deserve all these garlands for it. You have thrown away the lives of these brave citizens of ours, not in a war against the Persians or the Phoenicians, such as my brother Cimon fought, but in destroying a Greek city which is one of our allies.' Pericles listened to her words unmoved, so it is said, and only smiled and quoted to her Archilochus's verse:

Why lavish perfumes on a head that's grey?

Ion says that his victory over the Samians gave Pericles a prodigiously high opinion of himself. He reflected that it had taken Agamemnon ten years to capture a barbarian city, whereas he within nine months had made himself master of the most important and powerful city in Ionia. In fact, his claim is not so unreasonable, for in this war

1. This ceremony probably dated from 463 B.C. It was held in the Cera-meicus, outside the western gate of Athens.

the issue really was uncertain and the hazards very great, assuming that it is true, as Thucydides tells us,¹ that the Samians came very near to wresting from Athens her control of the seas.

29. A few years later, when the clouds were already gathering for the Peloponnesian war, Pericles persuaded the Athenians to send help to Corcyra in her war with Corinth² and so bring over to their side an island with a powerful navy at a time when the Peloponnesians had all but declared war on them. And yet when the people had agreed to this measure, Pericles sent a squadron of no more than ten ships under Lacedaemonius, the son of Cimon, as if his object were to humiliate him because Cimon's family was on especially good terms with the Spartans. Pericles intended to make sure that if no particular success were achieved under Lacedaemonius's command, then the latter would be discredited for his pro-Spartan sympathies, and so he allowed him only a few ships and sent him out against his will. In general he made a point of thwarting all Cimon's sons, on the pretext that they were not true Athenians, but had something alien about them even in their names, since one of them was named Lacedaemonius, another Thessalus, and a third Eleius, and their mother was believed to be a woman of Arcadia.

In consequence, Pericles was sharply criticized for the paltry size of the force he had sent. It was felt that it was too small to help the Corcyraeans in their hour of need, but that at the same time it provided those enemies of Athens who were accusing her of interference with an invaluable pretext, and he therefore reinforced it later with a larger squadron which arrived after the battle.³

This action enraged the Corinthians and they denounced the Athenians at Sparta. The Megarians also joined them to complain that they were being shut out and driven away from every market and every harbour which the Athenians controlled, contrary to the common rights of the Greeks and the articles of peace entered into upon oath. The people of Aegina also considered themselves oppressed and outraged and secretly bemoaned their grievances to the Spartans, as they did not dare to accuse the Athenians openly. At this point, too, Potidaea revolted, a city which, although a colony of

1. viii, 76.

2. 433 B.C.

3. See Thucydides, i.50.

Corinth, was subject to Athens, and the siege on which the Athenians then embarked further hastened the outbreak of the war.

In spite of all this a succession of embassies was sent to Athens, and Archidamus, the Spartan king, strove to placate his allies and bring about a peaceful settlement of most of their grievances. In fact, it seems likely that the Athenians might have avoided war on any of the other issues, if only they could have been persuaded to lift their embargo against the Megarians and come to terms with them. And since it was Pericles who opposed this solution more strongly than anyone else and urged the people to persist in their hostility towards the Megarians, it was he alone who was held responsible for the war.

30. It is said that a Spartan mission arrived in Athens to discuss this very subject and that Pericles took refuge in the pretext that there was a law which forbade the tablet on which the Megarian decree was inscribed to be taken down. 'Very well, then,' one of the envoys named Polyalces suggested, 'there is no need to take it down. Just turn its face to the wall! Surely there is no law forbidding that!' This was neatly put, but it had no effect on Pericles, who seems to have harboured some private grudge against the Megarians. However, the charge which he brought against them in public was that they had appropriated for their own profane use the territory of Eleusis, which was consecrated to Demeter and Persephone, and he proposed that a herald should be sent first to them and should then proceed to Sparta to complain of their conduct. Pericles was certainly responsible for this decree, which sets out to justify his action in humane and reasonable terms. But then the herald who was sent, Anthemocritus, met his death at the hands of the Megarians, so it was believed, and thereupon Charinus proposed a decree against them. This laid it down that henceforth Athens should be the irreconcilable and implacable enemy of Megara, that any Megarian setting foot in Attica should be put to death, and that the generals, whenever they took the traditional oath of office, should swear besides this that they would invade the Megarid twice in each year, and that Anthemocritus should be buried with honours beside the Thriasian gates, which are now known as the Dipylon.

On their side the Megarians denied that they had murdered Anthemocritus, and threw the blame for the Athenians' actions upon

Pericles and Aspasia, quoting those famous and hackneyed verses from Aristophanes' *Acharnians*:

Some young Athenians in a drunken frolic
Kidnapped Simaetha, the courtesan, from Megara.
The Megarians were furious, primed themselves with garlic
Just like their fighting-cocks, then came and stole
Two of Aspasia's girls to get their own back.¹

31. The real reasons which caused the decree to be passed are extremely hard to discover, but all writers agree in blaming Pericles for the fact that it was not revoked. Some of them, however, say that his firm stand on this point was based on the highest motives combined with a shrewd appreciation of where Athens' best interests lay, since he believed that the demand had been made to test his resistance, and that to have complied with it would have been regarded simply as an admission of weakness. But there are others who consider that he defied the Spartans out of an aggressive arrogance and a desire to demonstrate his own strength.

However, the most damning charge of all,² and yet the one which finds most support, runs somewhat like this. Pheidias the sculptor had been entrusted, as I have mentioned, with the contract for producing the great statue of Athena. His friendship with Pericles, with whom he had great influence, earned him a number of enemies through sheer jealousy, while others made use of him to test the mood of the people and see what their temper would be in a case in which Pericles was involved. They therefore persuaded Menon, one of the artists working under Pheidias, to seat himself in the market-place as a suppliant and ask for the protection of the state in return for laying information against Pheidias. The people granted the man's plea and a motion for Pheidias's prosecution was laid before the Assembly. The charge of

1. *Acharnians*, 524ff.

2. Plutarch offers no opinion, but the facts do not support this charge. Other accounts suggest that Pheidias may have been prosecuted soon after the statue was dedicated in 438-437 and that he may have been exiled soon afterwards and died in Elis about 432. Anaxagoras is now believed to have retired to Lampsacus nearly twenty years earlier, and Dracontides' motion was not passed until 430 and therefore had no connexion with the outbreak of the war. Thucydides gives no hint that Pericles' ascendancy was being challenged in the period immediately preceding the war, but rather that the crisis strengthened it.

embezzlement was not proved, because from the very beginning, on Pericles' own advice, the gold used for the statue had been superimposed and laid around it in such a way that it could all be taken off and weighed,¹ and this was what Pericles now ordered the prosecutors to do.

However, the fame of Pheidias's works still served to arouse jealousy against him, especially because in the relief of the battle of the Amazons, which is represented on the shield of the goddess, he carved a figure representing himself as a bald old man lifting up a stone with both hands, and also because he introduced a particularly fine likeness of Pericles fighting an Amazon. The position of the hand, which holds a spear in front of Pericles' face, seems to have been ingeniously contrived to conceal the resemblance, but it can still be seen quite plainly from either side.

So Pheidias was cast into prison and there he fell sick and died. According to some accounts he was poisoned by his enemies in an attempt to blacken Pericles' name still further. As for the informer, Menon, a proposal was passed, on Glycon's motion, to make him exempt from all taxes and public burdens and the generals were ordered to provide for his safety.

32. About the same time Aspasia was put on trial for impiety. She was prosecuted by Hermippus the comic poet, who also accused her of procuring free-born Athenian women for Pericles and receiving them into her house. A decree was also introduced by Diopceithes, the diviner, to the effect that anybody who did not believe in the gods or taught theories about celestial phenomena should be liable to prosecution, and this was aimed to cast suspicion on Pericles through Anaxagoras. The people took up these slanders only too readily, and while they were in this mood a bill was passed on Dracontides' initiative directing that the accounts of the public funds that Pericles had spent should be deposited with the prytanes, and that the jurors should pronounce their verdict on his case with ballots which had lain on the altar of the goddess on the Acropolis. However, this clause of the decree was amended by Hagnon, who moved that the case should be tried in the usual way, but before a body of 1,500 jurors, no matter whether it was to be termed a prosecution for embezzlement or bribery or malversation.

1. See Thucydides, ii, 13.

Pericles contrived to beg off Aspasia by bursting into floods of tears during her trial, so Aeschines tells us, and making a personal appeal to the jurors, but he was so alarmed for Anaxagoras's safety that he smuggled him out of the city. Pericles had already fallen foul of the people on the occasion of Pheidias's trial and he dreaded the jury's verdict on his own case, and so now that the war was threatening and smouldering, we are told that he deliberately fanned it into flame. He hoped in this way to dispel the charges against him and make the people forget their jealousy, since he knew that as soon as any great enterprise or danger was in prospect, the city would put herself in his hands alone because of his great authority and prestige. These are the motives which are alleged for his refusal to allow the people to give way to the demands of Sparta, but the true history of these events is hidden from us.

33. The Spartans, for their part, recognized that if Pericles could be removed from power, they would find the Athenians much easier to deal with, and so they demanded that Athens should rid herself of the blood-guilt of Cylon,¹ in which Pericles' family on his mother's side had been involved, as Thucydides explains. But this manoeuvre produced exactly the opposite effect to what was intended; instead of being slandered and treated with suspicion, Pericles now found himself more trusted and honoured by the Athenians than ever before, because they saw that the enemy feared and hated him more than any other single man. For this reason, before king Archidamus led the Peloponnesians into Attica, Pericles announced in public to the Athenians that if the king should ravage other estates but spare his own, either on account of the personal friendship between them or else to give his enemies cause to slander him, he would present all his lands and the buildings on them to the state.

The Spartans and their allies then proceeded to invade Attica with an immense army commanded by Archidamus. They advanced, devastating the land as they went, as far as Acharnae, which is very close to Athens, and there they pitched camp, for they imagined that the Athenians would never tolerate this, but would march out and fight them from sheer pride and anger. Pericles, however, judged that it would be a terrible risk to engage 60,000 Peloponnesian and Boeotian hoplites, (for the first invading army was at least as strong as this) and

1. Pericles belonged to the house of Alcmaeon (see *Solon*, Ch. 12).